

BOSTON, MA REWARDING YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Profile of Partners: The Boston Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services is the Grantee, with the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) as subcontractor. The PIC is a non-profit employer-led intermediary organization providing both direct services to youth and employers and governance to the Boston's School-to-Career system in partnership with the Boston Public Schools. It is led by a steering committee co-chaired by School Superintendent Thomas Payzant and John McCarthy of Sovereign Bank.

Area Served: Boston's Empowerment Zone has 28 tracts with 56,984 residents. Unemployment rates are high with 35.8% living below the poverty line, and one tract having 66.3% below the poverty line. Students participate from three Boston Public High Schools and alternative education providers with large EZ student populations (Dorchester, Jeremiah E. Burke and South Boston High Schools, and Boston's Alternative Education Youth Providers' Network.)

Profile of Participants/Outcomes: Of the 415 students enrolled, 47% are female, 53% male; 70% Black, 15% Latino, 8% White, 7% Asian. 70% of students are 14-16 years old; 26% are 17-18 years old; 4% are 19-21 years old.

- Total number of students served: 463
- Students returning to school: all but 15, 10 of whom are high school graduates in the alternative education program
- Students enrolled in post-secondary: estimated 3-5
- Increased motivation of students through demonstrating the community and career Applications for math and science
- Improved academics, especially in math and science: data collection system does not have the capacity to measure and analyze grades.

Success Story: One South Boston High student with poor attendance and grades, applied for the RYA Odyssey (marine science) internship program. The career specialists and teachers were hesitant about accepting her because she seemed disengaged with the school and her peers. She had, however, participated regularly in the school's Saturday Envirolab program, where students test water samples on a boat/laboratory facility. She made a good case for her love of marine science in her interview, so she was accepted into the program under the fourth eligibility criterion. She has since been a star member of her internship team, completing research assignments and work tasks enthusiastically. Her school attendance has improved because she has to go to school each day in order to attend her internship. Recently, she was injured and was going to have to quit the program due to physical therapy appointments and decreased mobility. Her work site, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, felt so strongly about keeping her that they made scheduling and work assignment accommodations to keep her working there. We expect that she'll remain there until the end of the school year and will keep up her improved school attendance.

Profile of Services for Youth

- ***Enriched Summer Experience:*** 189 rising sophomores needed math remediation to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the state's new high-stakes standardized test. They spent two hours a day for four days a week receiving mathematics instruction utilizing a textbook and curriculum developed with the National Science Foundation that teach rigorous mathematics concepts using real world applications. Applying the principles learned in class, most students also had after-school jobs enhanced with project-based learning experiences or part-time jobs at private sector and non-profit sites. Through a new grant from the State Department of Education, additional eligible RYA students (juniors who show promise but have failed the MCAS) will be able to participate in "Classroom at the Workplace," aka "Project Success," an MCAS remedial program offered at summer work sites.
- ***Math and Science Enhancement:*** Math and science has been combined with part time jobs through the integration of a "Signature Project", whose methodology features guidelines that help teachers facilitate student projects characterized by "authenticity, academic rigor, applied learning, active exploration, adult connections and assessment" (the 6 A's). Developed by the Connected Learning Communities, it can be accessed at www.jff.org as part of "A Tool-Kit for Reinventing High School. Students in the three public high schools are grouped into small learning communities with a career theme, internships and projects, such as an environmental/marine science focus and jobs at the local aquarium and a marine research non-profit or a math/robotics project and a technology project (building a network and a web site) tied to jobs that involve tutoring youth and/or adults in math and computer use. Crittenton Hastings House is offering an applied economics program combining internships at Putnam Investments with a project involving the stock market. 114 students participated in programs of this design. For Leadership Development, about 20 students are working with Teen Empowerment, a community organization that seeks to develop peer leadership through internships.
- ***Year –Round Activities*** (see above) Placement of students in part-time and summer jobs. 41 students were placed in summer jobs, and 223 students were placed in part-time academic year jobs or internships.
- ***College Bound Assistance:*** 60-65 RYA students participated in the University of Massachusetts (UMass) college preparatory programs (Urban Scholars, Admissions Guaranteed Program) that included academic-year tutoring, college campus visits and college preparation workshops (financial aid, applications, etc.). Some will also attend the summer Upward Bound program of academics at the UMass Amherst campus. In the alternative education system, Sociedad Latina is running a health internship program for 7 students that includes college awareness and application assistance workshops.

Roles of Partners:

Linkages to Existing programs

Career Specialists have relationships with the UMass Urban Scholars/AGP program coordinators at each high school. The Boston PIC partners with the Boston Public Schools

School-to-Career Office to provide the project-based enrichment and professional development for the teachers. Students can be referred to Teen Empowerment, an established youth leadership/youth development organization in Boston.

Private/Public Sector Commitments

The Boston PIC regularly garners commitments from numerous local employers such as Verizon, the Federal Reserve Bank, Gillette, and New England Financial to provide summer jobs and enriched summer internships. The PIC is using RYA as a useful vehicle for creating clusters of enriched career-theme internships to demonstrate the potential of this activity to newer small learning communities, such as Dorchester High School's Engineering Technology Academy.

Secondary/ Post Secondary School Commitments

Dorchester, Jeremiah E. Burke and South Boston High Schools provide access to eligible students, assistance in identifying eligible students, program-planning assistance and staff support for the RYA programs. Post-secondary assistance is accessed largely through the UMass Programs (Urban Scholars and Admission Guaranteed Program), which are available to students at all three high schools. The Alternative Education Youth Providers collaborative provides access to eligible students, assistance in identifying eligible students, program-planning assistance and staff support.

Key Elements in Program's Success

- Identifying projects and internships that are both connected to math or science *and* a small learning communities theme or identity.
- Evaluating students' work experience using a developmental tool created by the Massachusetts Department of Education, called the Work-Based Learning Plan (accessible at www.doe.mass.edu/stw).
- Integrating RYA programming into Boston's larger educational and workforce development strategies. Our work with the schools complements Boston's educational reform efforts. Our work with alternative education assures a continuum of opportunities for youth outside the traditional school system.

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